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Juvenile Library.



THE LITTLE
ENGLISH GIRL;
A Tale for Children.

BELFAST :

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CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

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THE
LITTLE
ENGLISH GIRL;
A Tale
FOR CHILDREN.

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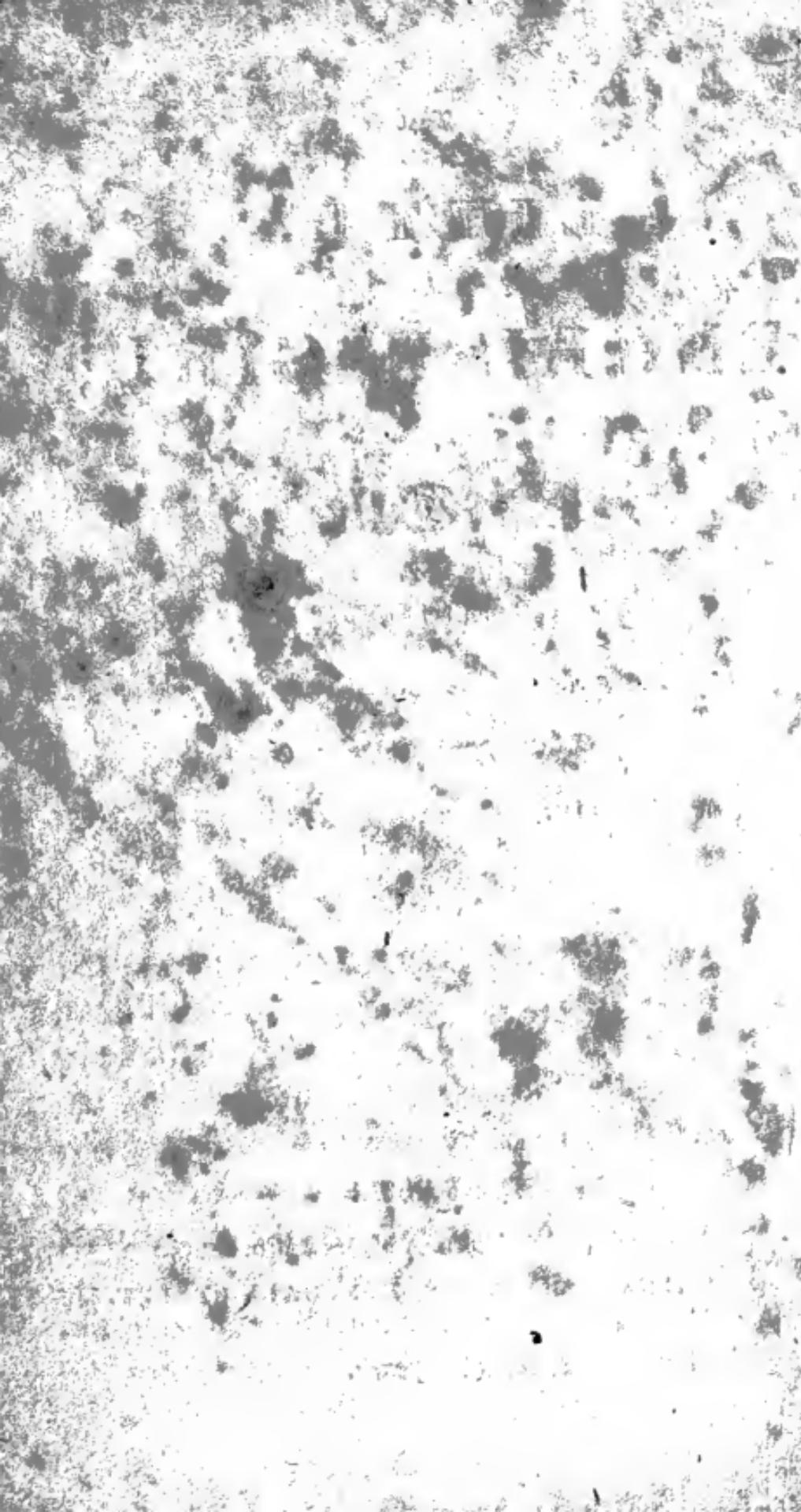
AND

Alazel and Florintina, a Fairy Tale.

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CHAP. I.

MARY AUBURN, the subject of the following story, was the only child of Captain Auburn, an English officer who lost his life in the service of his country. The day which returned him to his mother earth was witness to the birth of Mary and to the death of her mother. But an all-wise Providence, who deprived her of both her parents, watched over her infancy, and protected

her from harm. Nothing, indeed, is more certain than that God will provide for the children of the virtuous with a shepherd's care : he will feed them and lead them through the rugged paths of life. The parents of our Little English Girl, lived and died like christians ; they laboured to humble their minds and to teach themselves perfect resignation to the will of heaven : they were particularly just in all their dealings, and so far as their circumstances allowed, were humane and charitable ; by friendship and affection they were followed to their graves, and their worth will, I think, be long remembered by all who had the pleasure of knowing them.

Among the friends of Captain and Mrs. Auburn, was an amiable gentleman of the name of Arnold, who as soon as the eyes of Mrs. Auburn were closed in death, received the orphan Mary to his own habitation. The business that had occasioned Mr. Arnold to visit a foreign country was at this time concluded, and being ready to sail for Europe, he was resolved to make

the infant Mary the companion of his voyage ; he therefore hired a nurse to take charge of her, and in a few days after embarked for his native shore. As soon as Mr. Arnold, with his protegee, arrived in England, he procured a small but elegant house about nine miles from London, and to this retreat the little orphan was conveyed by her nurse. This poor woman was a native of England, who had accompanied an English family abroad : the yellow fever raged at that time in the island where their property lay, they were obliged to repair to it, and were all shortly cut off by the dreadful disease. The death of this family was a very great affliction to the nurse of little Mary, but she was reserved for a much greater ; and while she was lamenting over the graves of her departed protectors, she was informed that her husband had lost his life at the battle of Alexandria : her situation was now truly melancholy. She had lost her friends, her husband, and was now without money in a strange country. But the poor woman had a pious

mind, and in daily prayer recommended herself to heaven,—heaven did send her help ; she made her situation known to some humane characters, and was assisted by them ; she now left the island of — and repaired to — ; here she was fortunate enough to learn that a middle aged gentleman of the name of Arnold was in search of a prudent woman to take care of an infant ; the person who gave her this intelligence furnished her with Mr. Arnold's direction, and she immediately set off for his house—she saw Mr. Arnold—offered her service, and was engaged to take charge of the little orphan. She had now great cause to give thanks to Providence, for she not only found herself comfortably provided for, but in a few months an inhabitant of England, her native home. Mr. Arnold was very well pleased to find himself again on English ground : he too, was born in Britain, and preferred it to any other part of the creation.



CHAP. II.

WE shall pass over the infancy of the Little English Girl, and hasten to describe what she was when she entered into her tenth year. Her understanding was indeed far above her years ; her manners were gentle, and her heart was the seat of sensibility and humanity. At the elegant seminary of Bryan House, upon Blackheath, little Mary was placed by her kind guardian, who was anxious to give her a polite and useful education. The amiable Mrs. Bryan's instructions were not lost upon Mary, whose capacity seemed to keep pace with the sweetness of her disposition. In two years Mary's improvement was so great that Mr. Arnold

thought it unnecessary to leave her longer at school: she read the best English authors with propriety, had a perfect knowledge of plain and fancy work, and had made a tolerable progress in French and music; in the two last accomplishments Mr. Arnold excelled, and it was his intention to become her tutor, and to enlarge her knowledge in both.

Mary was therefore removed from Bryan house to the retreat of her infancy, and if the tear of regret sometimes stole from her eye, when she thought on her esteemed Mrs. Bryan and her agreeable little school-fellows, it was soon followed by a smile when she looked on her beloved protector. Deeply sensible of the obligations she owed him, it was her constant study to please him; every amiable principle had been early instilled by Mr. Arnold on the mind of his adopted child, and he now with pleasure perceived the fruit of them. Never indeed was man better formed for the tutor of youth than Mr. Arnold; his knowledge of the world, education, and superior

understanding, made him very equal to the task ; with prosperity and adversity he had been acquainted ; if he had been too much dazzled or misled by the former, in the early part of his life, his heart at a more advanced age had been amended by the latter. No man I believe had drank more deeply from the cup of sorrow than the worthy Mr. Arnold, but he was frequently heard to say that a man or woman unacquainted with misfortune must be a stranger to mankind, and very often has he, in the words of the poet, said to himself :

Afflictions from above
Are Angels sent
On embassies of love.
A fiery legion, at thy birth,
Of chast'ning woes were given
To pluck thy flowers of hope from earth,
And plant them high,
O'er yonder sky,
Transform'd to stars, and fix'd in heaven.

Though misfortune had lessened Mr. Arnold's attachment to the world, it had not divested him of sensibility of heart, he felt for poverty, and his pity was ever accompanied by his charity,

For tho' undecked with title, power or wealth,
Great with his generous deeds, and done by stealth.

HAYLEY.

By his domestics Mr. Arnold was beloved, for he considered them as unfortunate relatives, and treated them with the utmost humanity ; he never indeed conversed familiarly with them, but his orders were so mildly given that they were both willingly and respectfully obeyed. No man indeed laboured more to subdue improper pride, or to teach himself humility than the excellent Mr. Arnold ; in his mind he treasured the advice of a pious writer*, who addressed his readers in the following words :

“ Consider what you shall be !—your flesh returns to corruption and common earth again, nor shall your dust be distinguished from the meanest beggar or slave ; no, nor from the dust of brutes and insects, or the most contemptible of creatures. And as for your soul,—that must stand before God in the world of spirits, on a level with the rest of mankind, and divested of

* Rev. Dr. Isaac Watts.

all your haughty and flattering circumstances ; none of your vain distinctions in this life shall attend you to the judgment seat ; keep this tribunal in view and pride will wither and hang down its head."

With such an instructor as Mr. Arnold our young readers will not be surprised to hear that Mary was at the age of thirteen a very intelligent little girl ; her natural understanding was, as we have already observed, far above her years, and her kind guardian had taken care to lead it into a proper bias.

As Mr. Arnold led a very retired life Mary was very little acquainted with the world ; she indeed, was so satisfied with Mr. Arnold's society that she felt not a wish to enter it, and Mr. Arnold felt himself too happy in this little peaceful retreat to leave it for the noise and hurry of London. He possessed a thinking mind, and was sorry he had in the early part of his life wasted his hours in the walks of vanity and deception. To hold converse with the Being by whose command he lived, and to make himself acquainted with

his immensity, glory, and goodness, he willingly resigned this world ; his affections indeed were totally fixed on things above, and whether he walked abroad or confined himself to the house, his mind was occupied by religion and virtue ; as he strolled in his little garden or gazed on the beauty of the prospect which surrounded his peaceful retreat, he often repeated the following lines from the works of Mrs. Barbauld :—

I read his awful name emblazoned high
 With golden letters on the illumin'd sky ;
 Nor less the mystic characters I see
 Wrought in each flower, inscribed on every tree.
 In every leaf that trembles to the breeze
 I hear the voice of God among the trees.

In the practice of every religious and moral duty Mr. Arnold spent his days ; nor was he unrepaid for his labour ; the calm of peace lived in his bosom, to reward him for it. It sweetened his hours by day and gave to his nights refreshing slumbers. Such, my little readers, is the fruit of a well-spent life. May you, as you read my story, resolve to follow every good example, and you will, like the amiable Mr. Arnold, live beloved and happy.



CHAP. III.

THIRTEEN years had passed over the head of Mary, when Lady Careless, the only sister of Mr. Arnold, arrived at his house. Her ladyship was about thirty-six, almost four years younger than her brother, and what was commonly thought a fine woman. She was received with sincere affection by her brother, though he had every reason to think, from some parts of his sister's former conduct towards him, that she felt not for him that friendship which he had a right to expect from a person so nearly allied to him. Lady Careless had, indeed, on many occasions, acted contrary to her brother's wishes: she had given her hand to a

man whose character formed a striking contrast to his taste, and she had in spite of his advice, devoted the best part of her days to dissipation and folly.

Sir George and Lady Careless were, indeed, quite formed for each other ; they both loved the amusements of the fashionable world with the most sincere affection, had the same dislike to domestic life, and were alike in their indifference to religion. It is true they appeared every Sunday at St. Paul's church, but they neither prayed nor attended to the prayers, for alas ! Sir George and Lady Careless went to church merely because other persons of fashion went also ; the idea of amending their lives had never entered their heads : they lived as if they never expected to die, though they saw many of their fellow creatures suddenly borne by death from this scene of mortality.

Two daughters were the fruit of this union, and my young reader may suppose that the children of such parents were both ignorant and ridiculous.

For the first time for sixteen years Mr. Arnold now beheld his sister. He was surprised at her visit, and though truly happy to see her under his roof, he was concerned to find from her conversation that time had not worn out her taste for the idle pleasures, or rather follies, of the world.

As soon as Mary entered the room where Mr. Arnold and Lady Careless were engaged in conversation, the former introduced her as his adopted daughter to the latter, who desired to know in what part of the world he had found such a beautiful little girl.

“ Recollect,” said Mr. Arnold, “ recollect, my dear sister, that Mary is the child of simplicity, she is unaccustomed to the language of flattery, and I beg you will not address her in it.”

“ No” replied Lady Careless, “ I do not flatter the child when I tell her the truth, and it certainly is true, that she is a beauty.”

“ Beauty,” replied Mr. Arnold, “ is no advantage to the possessor, if it is accompanied by the smallest vanity. My Mary, I hope, will always prefer

the beauty of the mind to beauty of face or form ; the first charms when we are no longer young, the last lives but an hour."

"Pray, my dear brother, do not begin to preach ; I shall absolutely die of the horrors, if you do," said lady Careless. "Come, my dear," continued her gay ladyship, addressing Mary, "come my dear, sit down to the piano, and let me hear you play ; but let it be something lively, for I don't like your dull melancholy tunes."

Mary instantly obeyed her ladyship, for though she had a very humble opinion of her own playing, she thought her ladyship might lay her refusal to ill manners, or a disposition which wished not to oblige.

Lady Careless bestowed much praise on Mary's performance, though she did not in reality know whether she played with or without judgment. She knew nothing of music herself, though she affected to understand it ; the truth is, that Lady Careless had no taste for any thing but cards ; but though a finished gamester, she was mostly un-

successful, and had lost serious sums at this destructive amusement.

If Lady Careless had not lost money to a considerable amount, she would never have spent a day in her brother's house ; solitude ill agreed with a disposition like hers ; but necessity compelled her to fly for assistance to the only person who was interested for her. To Lord B—— she had lost two thousand pounds ; it was a debt of honour, and her ladyship was anxious to discharge it. To Sir George Careless she did not communicate her loss, as she well knew he would not curtail his own expenses to replenish her purse ; and reproach, she felt, would be his only answer, if she demanded from him the lost sum.

For a few days Lady Careless looked a little serious ; that is, she did not laugh as much as she usually did, for her thoughts were engaged in considering how or where she could procure the two thousand pounds ; at one moment she determined to part with some of her diamonds, at another, to borrow the sum she wanted from Lady Gossip

a very intimate friend of her ladyship's; but reflecting that Lady Gossip never kept a secret, but on the contrary made it a point to relate to the public every thing she knew, she determined not to put it in her power to tell what she, Lady Careless, wished to conceal. In this extremity she thought on applying to her brother for the sum. From his former friendship Lady Careless thought she had every thing to hope, and she was now determined to try it. Her ladyship accordingly informed Sir George that it was her intention to visit her brother for a short time. Sir George expressed no displeasure at this information, and her ladyship set off for the retreat of her brother.

Mr. Arnold received her, as our young reader has already heard, with the affection of a friend; but he little suspected that he owed the happiness of beholding her to the misfortune of her having lost two thousand pounds. Lady Careless did not, however, long suffer him to remain ignorant of the nature of her visit, for one morning, when Mary's absence gave her an op-

pportunity, she briefly informed him of her run of bad luck, as she termed it, and of the trouble it had involved her mind in.

Mr. Arnold heard her with the greatest concern. He was shocked at the hold which the follies of the world seemed to have taken of his sister's affections, and he trembled to think on what a dangerous precipice she stood.

" You do not speak, my dear brother," said Lady Careless; " you do not tell whether it will be in your power to lend me two thousand pounds, to pay Lord B——."

" How, or in what way, Lady Careless, can I reply to what you tell me, when I know not what words can convey an idea of the sorrow I feel for the indiscretion of your conduct; can you as a wife, as a mother, or a Christian, devote your time to the gaming table; can you abuse the health, the wealth, which God has bestowed on you, in this idle sinful manner? O, Lady Careless! you have acted in an inexcusable manner, and——"

“ Dear, dear !” exclaimed Lady Careless, “ there is no such thing as telling you any thing ; you see a crime in all I do and say ; but, my dear brother, you know, living in the world as I do, and living out of it as you do, are two very different things. It would be very possible,” continued her ladyship, “ it would be very possible for you to lose two thousand pounds at play, if you lived in London, and frequented houses of fashion.”

“ Yes,” replied Mr. Arnold with a sigh, “ what you say might happen, if my boyish days were again to return, but at my present time of life, or yours—”

“ Well now,” cried Lady Careless, interrupting him, “ well now, you are certainly going to preach—you really alarm me.”

“ Lady Careless,” returned the worthy Mr. Arnold, “ such levity of manners, such an unconcern for either your present or future happiness, discovers, I am sorry to tell you, an unfeeling mind.”

“ How oddly you talk,” brother,” said

Lady Careless, with a frown ; " one would imagine that I had been guilty of murder. But pray let me ask you, in the words of Lady Townly, in the Provoked Husband, what indiscretions have I committed that are not daily practised by an hundred other women of fashion."

" I see," returned Mr. Arnold, " that you can reconcile vice to your own mind very easily."

" Why, my dear, good brother, your notions are five hundred years old ; you do not seriously wish to possess me with them, I suppose ; if indeed you should make a convert of me, I must never think of showing myself in London again, unless I could be philosopher enough to scorn the world's loud laugh."

" Very well, Madam," returned Mr. Arnold, " I shall not trouble you then with my old fashioned advice."

" O dear, you may say to me whatever you wish ; I shall hear you patiently," replied Lady Careless.

" I wish," said Mr. Arnold, " that you would hear me with attention, I

should then endeavour to convince you, that a female gamester is a character that excites horror in every uncorrupted mind. You are no longer young, Lady Careless, whatever your vanity or your glass may tell you to the contrary. A woman of five or six-and-thirty should throw off the follies of youth, and sometime reflect that she is mortal."

" Well," replied Lady Careless, endeavouring to look serious, " I allow all you say to be right, and I shall endeavour to profit by your sensible advice ; but I know I cannot begin the work of repentance, while I owe the sum of two thousand to my Lord B — ."

" That sum I will present you with in a day or two," returned Mr. Arnold ; " but let it be your last debt of that kind."

Lady Careless was now more rejoiced than she had before been dismayed. She thanked her brother a thousand times, and declared she should always retain a sense of the obligation she had to him. As Mary now entered the room, another subject was introduced by Mr. Arnold.



CHAP. IV.

IN a short time Mr. Arnold presented Lady Careless with the sum she had wished for. And in two days after she set off for London. Mary was not disappointed that her ladyship did not prolong her visit: the manners of Lady Careless were not calculated to make a favourable impression on the mind of a sensible child. Mary's discernment saw through her ladyship's light character, and she felt very little inclination to cultivate her acquaintance; as the sister of her beloved guardian she wished to esteem her, but even infancy cannot be taught to respect a trifler: and Mary, who observed nothing but levity in the manners of Lady

Careless, felt it impossible to give her her esteem.

By her able instructor Mary had been taught to set a proper value on time, and to consider that day as lost on which she was not usefully employed.

Mary, it is true, was now only in her thirteenth year, but from a habit of reflecting on serious subjects she possessed a very decided mind. This amiable child always remembered, that if she laid aside or neglected her devotional duty to God, or refused her bounty to the poor, she would have no superiority over a savage, whose only object is to provide food for himself.

Young as she was she felt she had a part to perform, and she knew what I hope my little readers knows also, that Heaven keeps an account of every mis-spent hour.

It is indeed incumbent on children, as well as persons of riper years, to acknowledge their obligations to Providence : ah, surely, it is while the mind is open to every impression, that the principles of virtue ought to be instilled.

Mr. Arnold was quite of our opinion, and stored his pupil's mind, at a very early age, with lessons of morality and truth ; as her understanding unfolded, she became sensible of the advantage which such kind of instruction afforded ; and she secretly gave thanks to Heaven, for having given to her infancy such a friend and instructor as Mr. Arnold. But now the time arrived which was to deprive her, for some time, of his beloved society : business of importance required his presence for a few months in Ireland ; and as he hoped to be able to return in the course of that time, he addressed a letter to his sister, to request she would permit his Mary to reside with her during his absence.

Lady Careless was happy to have it in her power to return, in any way, her brother's good nature. His having furnished her with the sum of two thousand had made an impression, something like gratitude, on her mind ; and she lost no time in assuring her brother, that Mary would be considered an acquisition in her family.

Our little heroine was accordingly sent to London: and her amiable guardian pursued his journey to Ireland.

The mind of Mary was not at all in unison with the gaiety which surrounded her at the abode of lady Careless. Berkley-square did not display a more elegant house than Lady Careless had selected; its furniture was of the most fashionable and expensive kind; and in every thing that Mary perceived, except in the family of Lady Careless, there was a mark of care, and an appearance of elegance.

Lady Careless had two daughters; the eldest about fourteen—the youngest thirteen years old; they were both rather pretty, but their manners discovered how very little care had been taken of their education. They mutually endeavoured to render themselves agreeable to Mary, but her mind was not at ease, and she found it impossible to draw entertainment or pleasure, even from novelty. This first separation from her guardian was most sensibly felt by her; she longed to be restored to him again, and impatiently counted the hours of absence.



CHAP. V.

THE Misses Careless were not at all satisfied, that Mary had discovered so little surprise or pleasure at the numerous amusements to which they had introduced her ; that a girl of thirteen should prefer the calm of the retirement she had emerged from, to the pastimes and splendour of fashionable life, astonished them. Like Lady Careless, her daughters loved pleasure to an excess, and they now rejoiced that they were allowed to partake of it. These neglected girls seldom indeed appeared in the presence of their mother ; but since the arrival of Mary they had been indulged by occasionally meeting her in the morning, or at dinner,

or on an afternoon. Mary was indeed soon fatigued with the same dull round of company ; the play, the opera, and the ball, soon lost their novelty ; and she often sent a secret sigh after the solitude of Mr. Arnold's retreat. From the society of the daughters of Lady Careless, Mary received no pleasure, she could not indeed esteem girls that were every hour displaying some new absurdity, besides these young ladies so often violated *truth* in the course of their conversation, that she longed to do away their acquaintance. She was, however, obliged to associate constantly with them, but they as constantly sunk in her opinion. Nothing struck Mary more than that want of humanity, which her companions so often evinced, but she was once more than ever disturbed by it.

While Mary and the above-mentioned young ladies were taking a morning walk, they were followed by a poor woman who, in the most supplicating voice, asked charity ; there was a look of resignation in the face of the beggar, that arrested the eye of observa-

tion ; her garments, though worn, were clean ; and in short, her general appearance was calculated to awaken compassion.

But compassion resided not with the haughty Miss Careless, whom the pauper addressed her complaint to ; that truly insensible young lady no sooner perceived the poor woman, and heard her implore charity, than she said, with a look of hauteur, and in accents of anger, there is no such thing as walking the streets for beggars.

“ No indeed,” echoed her ill-natured sister turning to the afflicted creature, “ no, indeed, but I tell you my good woman you may spare yourself the trouble of relating any of your melancholy tales to us, for we don’t believe a word such idle people say.”

“ Ah, Miss,” returned the pauper, “ ah Miss, do not speak so hard to a poor woman, but give her something for God’s sake.”

“ No,” replied the unfeeling girl, “ no, I would not give you a halfpenny if I was made of money.”

“ God bless you, Miss,” said the poor

woman, turning slowly from the young insulter.

“Stop,” cried Mary, addressing the beggar, “stop, and take the little I have got to give you.”

As she spoke the woman approached her, and Mary, while the tear of pity stole from her eye, extended her charity.

“Sweet Angel,” said the grateful and surprised woman, receiving the half-guinea, which Mary reached her; “sweet angel, may the blessing of God, who has made both the rich and the poor for ever wait on you.”

Having uttered these words, the poor woman hastened to procure some food for her sick husband and infant children, who, from the window of their wretched hovel, watched for her return.

“I am sure, said Miss Careless, addressing herself to Mary, “I am sure that impudent woman did not deserve money; for my part I make it a point to do as my mamma does, that is, never to give charity to beggars when they tease for it.”

“Such a determination is very cruel,” returned Mary; “besides, in turning

our backs on the poor, we disobey the orders of God."

" And I insist on it," retorted Miss Careless, interrupting her, " I insist on it that the wretch was truly impertinent to follow us when I desired her not."

" If you were in this poor woman's situation," returned Mary, " you would perhaps be more importunate than she has been ; if you suffered as she does from cold and hunger, you would not perhaps be prevented by any one from trying to get a little money."

" I do not know what she may suffer from hunger," replied the inhuman Miss Careless, " but I know she cannot suffer from cold, for the weather is very fine!"

" I hope," said Mary, " that you will shortly be ashamed of this insensibility to the sufferings of your fellow creatures, and dismiss it from your bosom."

" Do not give yourself the trouble, I beg Miss Auburn, to hope any such thing ; for I can assure you, nothing will ever make me throw away my compassion or money on teasing street-walking beggars."

As soon as Mary and her companions returned home, the latter informed their mother, that Mary had bestowed half-a-guinea on an idle beggar. You know, mamma, continued the humane young ladies, you know mamma, you say it is no charity to give to such people ; and papa says they should be taken up when they are found in the streets and sent into the work-house."

" And he says right," returned Lady Careless, " it is the fittest place for strollers."

" If every one was of your ladyship's opinion," said Mary mildly, " the sick poor would be badly off indeed."

" Upon my word," returned lady Careless, colouring with anger, " you are a pretty person to give an opinion about the matter ; I am come to a pretty pass, truly," continued her ladyship, " when a brat not yet fourteen presumes to dictate to me."

" I beg your ladyship's pardon," replied Mary, " I did not intend to offend, I only said what I really thought, and what I still think. Mr. Arnold," continued Mary, with tears in her eyes,

“ always taught me to commisserate the poor, and——”

“ He has taught you a great deal of nonsense, I know,” returned Lady Careless, interrupting her, “ but I suppose,” she continued looking stedfastly at Mary, “ the true reason of your compassionating beggars so much, is, that you recollect you would have been one yourself if my brother had not taken you.”

These words were uttered with an intention to wound the feelings, and to humble the mind of Mary. For a moment they had the effect of hurting her feelings, but her mind was so devoid of pride, and her understanding so good, that Lady Careless, who imagined she had severely mortified her, enjoyed but a momentary pleasure, as she only traced in her face the transient blush of indignation.

Consider then my little reader, that it is in your power, by imitating the character of Mary, to find happiness, and to make it your inseparable companion.

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